



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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Measure balances value of programs with neighborhood concerns...

COUNCIL APPROVES ZONING CHANGE TO ALLOW CONTINUATION OF SUMMER CAMPS AT COUNTY PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Popular summer camp and other programs can continue to be held at private schools around the County under a zoning amendment approved unanimously by the Montgomery County Council.

Such programs include tutoring and college preparatory courses, art education, artistic performances, indoor and outdoor recreation programs, and summer day camps.

"This zoning amendment will help us to keep doing what we're already doing – opening up community facilities to all kids in the community," said Council President Steve Silverman, who co-sponsored the legislation with Councilmember Howard Denis.

"These schools are a tremendous resource. Their programs are popular and valuable. And, through our special exception process, we are safeguarding neighborhoods by making sure these facilities would not cause too much unnecessary traffic, noise, or lighting problems for surrounding neighborhoods."

The provisions of this bill would allow current programs to continue until April 22, 2004, after which time the institution may have to obtain a special exception.

The Council also authorized the Board of Appeals in the special exception process to take into consideration the total number of car trips generated by a schools' regular program and after school or summer programs in evaluating traffic impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

The Council addressed community concerns by allowing the Board of Appeals to establish a limit on the number of program participants and frequency of large events, while allowing existing programs to add new programs by modification to their original special exception.

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"This is a win-win situation if ever I saw one," said Councilmember Denis. "Private schools that meet the regulations could continue to carry on with their programs – and our children and grandchildren will have available a wide array of summer activities to enrich them in body, mind, and spirit.

"This sets up a process where neighborhoods are protected and programs that meet the standards can continue."

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